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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
PROBLEMS OF FIRST YEAR TEACHERS
IN AN URBAN SCHOOL SYSTEM

by

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled PROBLEMS OF FIRST YEAR TEACHERS submitted by John Leslie Milne in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to examine the degree of difficulty perceived on eight selected problem areas by beginning teachers in the Edmonton Public School System. A second purpose was to determine if any significant variance in the degree of difficulty existed among the problem areas when they were tested on the variables of sex, age, grade level taught, and number of years of teacher education.

Questionnaires were sent to all beginning teachers within the system. The data analysis was based upon returns from 220 teachers. For each hypothesis, an analysis of variance was used to test the significance of differences between means of the eight problem areas. Wherever significant differences were found among means by the analysis of variance, the Newman-Keuls test was used to investigate the range distribution of significant mean differences of the problem area variables.

The analysis of the data indicated that none of the beginning teacher problems investigated were perceived as being extremely difficult to solve. Methods, Discipline, and Evaluation were problem areas presenting from "very" to "somewhat" degrees of difficulty. The remaining problem areas ordered on the basis of difficulty were Materials and Resources, Professional Relationships, Planning, Parent Relations and Classroom Routine--the last being a problem

area perceived as "easy" to solve. There were no significant differences in the rank ordering of problem areas by difficulty on the basis of sex or varying years of teacher education. Age and sex were the two personal characteristics most significantly associated with the degree of difficulty beginning teachers may experience in certain problem areas. The number of years of teacher education was the factor least associated with the degree of difficulty a beginning teacher may experience in certain problem areas.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

I. INTRODUCTION

Research on the problems experienced by first year teachers began in the early 1900's; therefore, a study of this sort cannot be regarded as an indication of little or no previous investigation. Much of the evidence in earlier studies points to little change in the character of problems faced by the beginning teacher.¹ In spite of this, the circumstances surrounding education have changed considerably in the past decade, and educators must be aware of implications which have arisen out of new developments. Any reduction in the number of problems suggested by a more selective recruitment program, improved teacher preparation methods, and/or better working conditions for teachers may be offset by the demands for a more comprehensive curricula and a more effective education within the larger administrative units.

The study of beginning teachers implies a situation which is not evident in other occupations, for the new teacher is not generally regarded as a junior partner nor given an apprentice type position. Being regarded as a

¹C. E. Smith, "Report on a Study of the Problems of Beginning Teachers in British Columbia," Report No. 5, British Columbia Research Council, 1958, p. 1.

finished product, the first year teacher is assigned to a class and expected to fulfill the same role as those teachers with many years experience. During the time of induction, the beginner is involved with learning his role, evaluating basic values of the teacher's culture, and forming a conception of standards which will affect his behaviour for years to come.²

It is the importance of this period of adjustment which encourages a study such as this. Three possibilities arise from the first years of teaching. The strongest and most capable teachers survive the trials of the first years to become competent and successful teachers. Others may lose their enthusiasm and accept teaching with indifference. The third possibility represents beginning teachers who resign from the teaching profession. While it is difficult to measure the ineffectiveness of teachers who are under the pressures of the first few years in the profession, the number of resignations from novice teachers indicates a degree of dissatisfaction within the ranks of the beginners. This is confirmed in the findings of studies which reveal that in some instances "more than half of those teaching in their first year do not intend to be teaching five years later."³

²Robert N. Bush, "The First Few Years," Pennsylvania School Journal, 114:1 (September, 1965-66), p. 8.

³Ibid., p. 1.

II. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to determine the problems which were perceived to be the most difficult by beginning teachers and to investigate the degree to which they perceived these problems as being solvable.

Statement of the Sub-problems

In the course of the study the following sub-problems were investigated.

1. Do the problems of beginning teachers differ significantly with the grade level being taught?

2. Do the problems experienced by beginning male teachers differ significantly from the problems experienced by beginning female teachers?

3. Do the problems of beginning teachers differ significantly in relation to the amount of teacher preparation?

4. Do the problems experienced by beginning teachers differ significantly with different teacher age groups?

III. THE NEED FOR THE STUDY

The fact that many beginning teachers are dissatisfied with the profession and do resign from it after the first few years of teaching indicates a high degree of discontent. The dropout figures for beginning teachers illustrate the great economic loss in terms of both material

and human resources.⁴ The percentage of beginning teachers in the teaching force has greatly increased in the past ten years. In 1957, Alberta teachers with one year of teaching experience composed 7.0 per cent of the total teaching force.⁵ From 1961 to 1965 this percentage has consistently remained at the 14 to 15 per cent level.⁶ In the 1966-67 term, 15.7 per cent of Alberta's teaching force were beginning teachers.⁷ These figures indicate a very significant increase in the proportion of beginning teachers.

Some studies have indicated the dropout of beginning teachers in the first few years to be as high as 50 per cent.⁸ In 1966-67, a study carried out by the Manitoba Teachers' Society found that those teachers who left to join other professions represented 7.6 per cent of the losses to the profession. Forty-three per cent of these teachers had

⁴Ray E. Edelfelt, "Educating the New Teachers," Educational Leadership, 24:2 (November, 1966), p. 147.

⁵R. S. MacArthur, S. A. Lindstedt, The Alberta Teaching Force in 1957-58, Monographs in Education No. 3, The Alberta Advisory Committee on Education Research, University of Alberta (1960), p. 77.

⁶M. T. Sillito, Dr. D. B. Black, The Alberta Teaching Force, September, 1964, Research Monograph No. 10, The Alberta Teachers' Association (April, 1965), p. 27.

⁷J. E. Wicks, T. F. Rieger, The Alberta Teaching Force, September, 1966, Research Monograph No. 12, The Alberta Teachers' Association (March, 1967), p. 23.

⁸W. S. Mason, The Beginning Teacher, United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (Washington: Government Printing Bureau, 1961), p. 102.

two or fewer years experience.⁹ In view of the fact that the proportion of beginning teachers is increasing and that this particular area of the profession is associated with such a high rate of withdrawal, the need for continuous investigation of beginning teacher problems becomes more acute.

Many of the problems experienced by novice teachers arise out of the nature of the task. Teaching in the classroom is often mistakenly regarded as a very simple process in which the teacher stands before a class instructing and guiding the learning of children. In reality, the typical classroom day involves the teacher in a large number of functions and settings other than those directly concerned with teaching.¹⁰ Dale included the high level of specialization and professional training required, the complexity of children, the conceptual nature of the teaching process, and the difficulty in finding a satisfactory evaluation of achievement as the four areas which combine to make teaching difficult.¹¹ The teaching task, therefore, suggests a

⁹Report "Annual Survey of Teacher Retention and Losses," compiled by Manitoba Teachers' Society (September, 1967), p. 2.

¹⁰Seymour B. Sarason, K. Davidson, B. Blatt, The Preparation of Teachers, (New York: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 1962), p. 5.

¹¹D. E. Griffiths, et al., Organizing Schools For Effective Education (Illinois: The Interstate Printers and Publishers, Inc., 1962), p. 13, citing E. Dale, Planning and Developing the Company Organization Structure (New York: American Management, 1955), p. 14.

situation of broad and complex responsibilities.

Teaching and the problems of teaching for beginning teachers cannot be placed beyond objective research. Shaplin criticized those, who being enamored with the concept of the art of teaching, placed it beyond the pale of rational thought, analysis, and science.¹² The extent to which educators can analyze and solve the problems depends upon their knowledge and anticipation of them. This knowledge and anticipation can be gained only by research.

It is hoped that the findings of this study will prove to be beneficial in a number of ways. An awareness of the problems experienced by first year teachers will provide a more objective basis from which to assess present teacher education, to establish more effective orientation procedures and to offer guidance in proper selection and placement of teachers. Research has indicated that there is a rapid increment in the technical and skill aspects of teaching during the first four or five years of experience.¹³ A study of beginning teachers' problems may serve not only to facilitate this growth but also to reduce the number of teacher drop-outs.

¹²J. T. Shaplin, "Practise in Teaching," Harvard Educational Review, 31 (Graduate School of Harvard, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., 1961), pp. 33-59.

¹³D. V. Tiedeman, editor, Teacher Competence and Its Relation to Salary (Cambridge, Mass.: New England School Development Council, 1956), pp. 85-90.

IV. DEFINITION OF TERMS

First year teacher. For the purpose of this thesis a first year teacher refers to one who is in his first year of full time teaching. The terms novice teacher and beginning teacher are synonymous to first year teacher.

V. LIMITATIONS

The present study was limited by the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, the interpretation of the questions at the time they were being answered, and by the perception of problems by beginning teachers. The respondents, who were members of a given population, were required to select responses from a given set of choices on the questionnaire. The study was limited by the examination of teacher problems in one school system only.

VI. DELIMITATIONS

In order to minimize the effects of external factors which may vary from one district to another and to investigate a system in which there were sufficient numbers of first year teachers, the beginning teachers of the Edmonton Public School System were used for the sample. The sample was limited to teachers who were teaching full time for the 1967-68 term. The sample did not include new teachers to the system who had transferred from other teaching situations or teachers who had returned after leaves of absence

or sabbatical leaves.

VII. ASSUMPTIONS

The study was carried out on the following assumptions:

1. It was assumed that the questionnaire and all the responses were valid.
2. It was assumed that after nearly a year of teaching experience beginning teachers would be able to perceive accurately their problems and the degree of their difficulty.

VIII. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The research of this study was carried out to test the following null hypotheses:

1. Beginning teachers will give no significantly different ranking to the eight problem areas on the criteria of difficulty.
2. Beginning male and beginning female teachers will give no significantly different ranking to the eight problem areas on the criteria of difficulty.
3. Beginning teachers of different age groups will give no significantly different ranking to the eight problem areas on the criteria of difficulty.
4. Beginning teachers, teaching different grade levels, will give no significantly different ranking to the eight problem areas on the criteria of difficulty.

5. Beginning teachers with varying years of teacher education will give no significantly different ranking to the eight problem areas on the criteria of difficulty.

CHAPTER II

RELATED THEORY AND A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to present an explanation of the model which provides a theoretical base for the research and to review the related studies pertinent to the problems of beginning teachers. The various forces and conflicts which may influence withdrawal from the profession are discussed in terms of the theory of the Getzels-Guba model. The related literature presents a general overview of all problems and their degree of difficulty. This is followed by a brief discussion of each problem area which was investigated by the questionnaire.

I. RELATED THEORY

Campbell examined "the degree of self-role conflict existing among teachers and the relationships between conflict, satisfaction, effectiveness, and confidence in leadership."¹ The hypotheses "that teachers with a low degree of self-role conflict in the teaching situation will (1) rate themselves higher in teacher satisfaction, (2) be rated by the principal as more effective teachers, and (3) express greater confidence in the leadership of the

¹R. F. Campbell, J. E. Corbally, Jr., and J. A. Ramseyer, Introduction to Educational Administration, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1958), p. 190.

principal" were confirmed.² In consideration of this research it might be assumed that teachers with a low degree of self-role conflict experience fewer problems in the schools.

On the basis of the similarity between self-role conflict and teachers' problems, the writer utilized the Getzel's Guba model as the means of explaining the beginning teachers' problems which arise when the needs of the teacher and the expectations of the school do not coincide.

Figure 1, the social system, a concept which could be illustrated by a single school organization, consists of the nomothetic and idiographic dimensions.

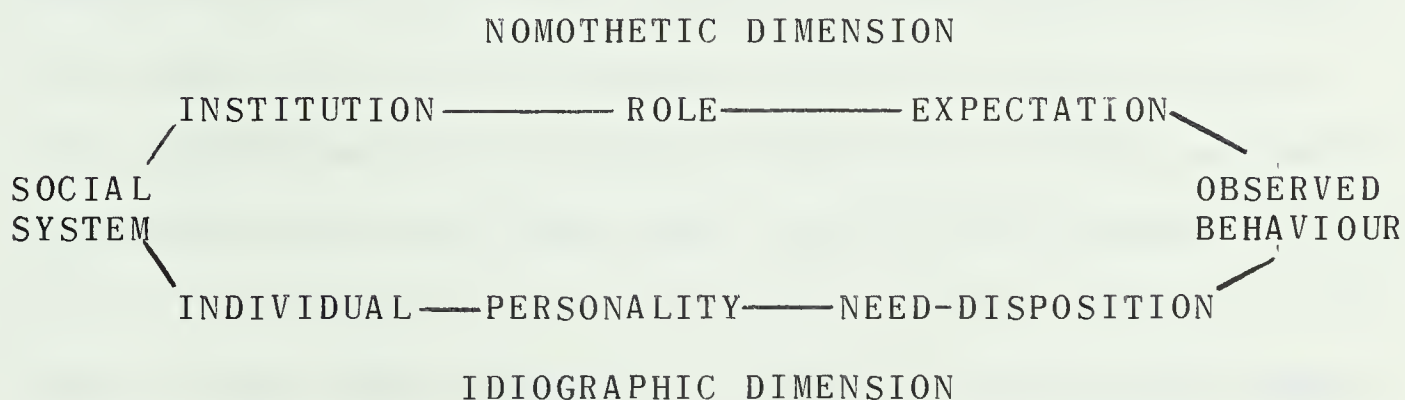


FIGURE 1

MODEL FOR THE STUDY OF THE SCHOOL AS A SOCIAL SYSTEM³

²Ibid., p. 191.

³Jacob W. Getzels and Herbert A. Thelen, "The Classroom Group as a Unique Social System," The Dynamics of Instructional Groups, N.S.S.E. Yearbook LIX, No. 2 (Chicago: National Society for the Study of Education, 1960), p. 69.

The nomothetic dimension is sociological in nature. This formal or normative role dimension of activity represents institutionalized roles and expectations. The idiographic dimension is psychological in nature, and represents the unique personal dispositions which arise from within the individual. Social behaviour, a function of the two dimensions, can be more completely understood with a knowledge of the Getzels-Guba model.

The behaviour of the beginning teacher within the social system of the school is an attempt to develop a pattern of actions acceptable to both the institutionalized role and the needs of the individual. In contrast to occupations which may only require either technical skills or personal qualities, teaching demands a combination of both specialization and personal ability to bring adequate creativity into the classroom. While some incumbents easily accept the obligations of the social system, others do not come to terms with the expectations and as a result experience many problems.

Guba believes that four elements, behavioural determinants, alienating forces, integrating forces, and actuating forces exist in all behavioural models. A brief description of the elements applicable to this research

would serve to illustrate their relationship to the study.⁴

The science of human behaviour proposes that from the time of birth, actions are influenced or controlled by "determinants". These behavioural determinants, the first of the four elements to be discussed, take the form of instincts, drives, values, and expectations which lead people to behave in particular ways. By the time a beginning teacher faces the expectations of his role he has already, as an individual, developed consistent ways of behaving. Conflict concerning the nature of behaviour that is appropriate will arise because of the influence of mutually exclusive determinants. The attitudes from earlier roles may be in direct conflict with the specialized role expectations of teaching.

Behavioural determinants are classified by Guba as being either technical or human. The technical or nomothetic classification represents an expected regulation of activities so that organizational goals may be achieved. For the beginning teacher some of these formal, impersonal, and external aspects are represented in the value premises of teaching. Teaching requires specialized knowledge, specialized methods of presentation, and specific theories

⁴Theory based upon J. W. Getzels, "Administration as a Social Process" in A. W. Halpin, ed., Administrative Theory in Education, The Midwest Administration Center, University of Chicago (Illinois: Interstate Printers and Publishers, Inc., 1958), Chapter 7.

on learning. These skill requirements may be further complicated by the various conditions and settings of differently organized schools.

The human behavioural determinants, or idiographic elements include personal attitudes, motivations, and predispositions of individual human beings. These elements are an important aspect of teaching, for while the institution requires a conscious control of behaviour towards certain goals, the creativity of teaching calls the total personality into play. In contrast to the technical determinants which arise from without the individual, the idiographic determinants arise from within. Incongruence within or between the technical and human determinants creates problems for the individual.

The alienating forces compose a second element of Guba's model. The conflict experienced by the incumbent when he is asked to perform tasks necessitating two mutually exclusive forms of behaviour creates tension, frustration, and inefficiency. The degree of ease with which the individual accepts his role is directly proportional to the congruence of nomothetic and idiographic elements.

The third element of the model, the integrating forces, supports the individual against alienating forces. Although the beginning teacher has not yet had the opportunity to accept fully the goals of the school and a devotion to the profession, other cohesive bonds are usually quite

evident. Some of these include a desire and determination to do well and an enthusiasm for working with young people. The integrating forces, by balancing the alienating forces, bind the individual to the system.

The fourth element within the system is the actuating force. This stimulus, which is created by exposing the incumbent to the behavioural requirements, activates the organization into an operative and functional system.

The balance between the alienating and integrating forces creates an equilibrium within the organization. By relating the model directly to the single school organization and the beginning teacher, a similar equilibrium can be found. Individuals vary greatly in their talent and readiness for teaching. Possessing limited perception, the first year teacher begins his career in a bewildering hierarchy of institutionalized relationships. While some role incumbents understand and agree at once on the mutual obligations arising out of the idiographic and nomothetic dimensions, others, in an attempt to conform, accept a tenuous and unstable compromise. The object of the beginning teacher then, is to learn with a minimum of difficulty the role expected of him, and thereby serve the needs of both his organization and his personality.

This theoretical study has indicated some of the questions which must be considered upon reviewing problems of the beginning teacher. Are the problems caused by the unsuitable personality of the teacher? Are there

unrealistic expectations which the teacher is not capable of accepting? The study of beginning teachers' problems was an attempt to answer some of these questions.

II. A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Much of the literature referring to problems experienced by beginning teachers must, by necessity, be based upon other studies and research. It can be assumed that at least two groups may speak with authority on teacher problems--the teachers themselves and their principals or supervisors. The complexity and vagueness of the teacher's role makes its evaluation difficult. Oliver indicated that teachers who tried to specify their professional needs quite often viewed them in a light quite different from objective observers.⁵ Contrary to this, Smith found that although teachers, principals, and supervisors gave different emphases to various problems there were no differences of opinion concerning the nature of the problems.⁶ McGillivray, in a very recent study of teachers of secondary schools, also came to the conclusion that teacher groups and

⁵W. A. Oliver, Teachers' 'Educational Beliefs Versus Their Classroom Practices,' Journal of Educational Research, 47 (September, 1953), pp. 47-55.

⁶C. E. Smith, "Report on a Study of the Problems of Beginning Teachers in British Columbia," Report No. 5, British Columbia Research Council, 1958, p. 9.

supervisor groups were in general agreement on problem areas.⁷ From these studies it may be assumed that teachers and supervisors are usually in agreement on the problem areas.

Dropkin and Taylor considered another aspect which could be a factor in the perception of teachers' problems. A statistically significant positive correlation was found between the complexity of the problems perceived and the grade point averages in professional courses. The investigators interpreted the results as indicating that those who did well in professional courses could perceive of themselves as having more problems. This suggested that students who did not do well in professional courses might not understand the educational process to the extent that they could readily evaluate their situation.⁸

Smith indicated that the varied nature of previous research was not conducive to summarization in a form which would allow the listing of difficulties in a strict order of seriousness.⁹ This aspect was confirmed by Dropkin and

⁷William R. McGillivray, "A Survey of Supervisory Assistance as Perceived by Beginning Teachers in Selected Urban High Schools in Ontario," (unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Alberta, Edmonton, July, 1966), p. 142.

⁸S. Dropkin and M. Taylor, "Perceived Problems of Beginning Teachers and Related Factors," Journal of Teacher Education, 14 (December, 1963), p. 389.

⁹Smith, op. cit., p. 1.

Taylor. Their research found discipline, relations with parents and methods of teaching as frequently mentioned problems. However, the average responses suggested that the problems were viewed as only somewhat difficult, and their importance was, therefore, lessened.¹⁰

A review of the research indicates a discrepancy in the areas which present the most serious problems for beginning teachers. The earlier studies have a tendency to identify such areas as salaries, supplies and clerical tasks as problem areas.^{11, 12} Smiley and Sprague in a study of professional difficulties of beginning teachers as seen by elementary principals noted that the problems judged most difficult for beginning teachers were chiefly of two kinds--those calling for teachers to adapt their teaching to the needs of children of different ability, achievement, and background, and those calling for the use of group procedures in teaching.¹³ Whiteman, in a survey of sixty newly inducted teachers from both rural and urban, secondary and

¹⁰Dropkin, op. cit., p. 386.

¹¹M. M. Tower, "Problems of Beginning Teachers in Indiannapolis Public Schools," Educational Administration and Supervision, XLII (May, 1956), p. 261.

¹²W. R. Lane and G. G. Eye, The New Teacher Comes to School (New York: Harper and Brothers, Inc., 1956), p. 91.

¹³M. B. Smiley, A. R. Sprague, "Professional Difficulties of Beginning Teachers As Seen By Elementary School Principals," "Office of Institutional Research, Study Number 10 (New York, November, 1957), p. 17.

elementary schools, reported the interpretation of material and the adjustment to the teaching load as a difficult problem.¹⁴

Rhodes and Peckham, in an evaluation of beginning teachers listed the ability to plan and motivate, a knowledge of basic skills, and the ability to develop pupil morale as being the three most important professional competencies.¹⁵

The Alberta Teachers' Association sent out questionnaires to the principals of all schools where recent graduates of the Universities of Alberta and Calgary were teaching in 1967. The results of this research found the most serious beginning teachers' problems to be an inability to maintain discipline, a lack of knowledge of student behaviour, poor lesson planning and inadequate subject matter knowledge. In this study discipline was seen by the principals as a much more serious problem than any other.¹⁶

Other research has found these areas to be difficult ones for novice teachers, but at the same time no pattern of problems has been identified. Shuster identified learning teaching methods, understanding children, planning and

¹⁴Robert L. Whiteman, "Fears of Beginning Teachers," Ohio Schools, XLIV:6 (September, 1966), p. 23.

¹⁵Fred G. Rhodes, Dorothy R. Peckham, "Evaluation of Beginning Teachers," Journal of Teacher's Education, II (March, 1960), pp. 56-60.

¹⁶Report of the Alberta Teachers' Association, Selection Procedures Questionnaire, Appendix B, 1967.

discipline as the most difficult problem areas.¹⁷ Stout, whose study was based upon questionnaires compiled by the administrators of eighty schools, ranked control, inadequate planning, and public relations as the greatest weaknesses of beginning teachers.¹⁸ McGillivray found that additional help was needed for beginning teachers in the areas of improving teaching methods, understanding and motivating adolescents and student evaluation.¹⁹ The same general areas were found to be recurring problems in other studies.

In view of the fact that the pattern of problems is rather indefinite, a brief review of each problem area covered in the questionnaire follows.

Classroom Routine.

Smith found that the novice teacher appeared to be very "concerned" with the practical difficulties of classroom teaching.²⁰ Other research has indicated similar findings. Wallace, who surveyed beginning teachers in twenty-seven states, found that learning routine was a

¹⁷A. H. Shuster Jr., "Supervision and Non-Professionally Prepared Teachers," Educational Administration and Supervision, XLII (May, 1956), p. 280.

¹⁸John B. Stout, "Difficiencies of Beginning Teachers," Journal of Teacher Education, 3 (March, 1952), pp. 43-46.

¹⁹McGillivray, op. cit., p. 142.

²⁰Smith, op. cit., p. 6.

major problem.²¹ Tower's investigation indicated that teachers desired more help keeping records and making reports.²² There is some indication that these duties may be so onerous because the beginning teacher is unaccustomed to them. The importance of this problem was emphasized by Stroud who stated that teacher maladjustment resulted from overloading the teacher with "humdrum" work after school and demanding excessive community responsibilities.²³ This is a problem which could worsen as the schools continue to expand the curriculum to prepare students for the modern day world.

Methods

The concept of "methods" which encompasses the broad area of what teachers do or are expected to do in the classroom often becomes an area of criticism. Indications are that methods courses are sometimes considered by the student teacher as "common sense" procedures to use in appropriate situations. The real importance of them is not understood until the beginner finds himself in the actual classroom situation. A misinterpretation of the proper mode of expression can result in a chain of unpleasant difficulties.

²¹M. S. Wallace, "The Introductions of New Teachers into School and Community," North Central Association Quarterly, XXV (October, 1950), p. 238.

²²Tower, op. cit., p. 261.

²³J. B. Stroud, "The School Administrator and Problems of Teacher Adjustment," Educational Digest, X (May, 1945), pp. 9-11..

Shaplin stated that the novice teacher often feels the necessity of utilizing techniques which require unusual stimuli and extensive student participation. The beginning teacher who practises unorthodox methods before developing a rapport with the class and surveying classroom behaviour in lecture and assignment type lessons often creates problems for himself.²⁴

The background knowledge of the teacher is a second area which often influences the manner in which he is capable of teaching.²⁵ A beginning teacher may have a more than adequate knowledge of a specialized area and yet be lacking in the substantive aspect. The criticism was confirmed in the British Columbia study in which 26 per cent of the principals indicated a "lack of general scholarship" of beginning teachers.²⁶

Materials and Resources

Recent studies have indicated that unsatisfactory surroundings and inadequate supplies are no longer serious problems. Kuefler found that this was one problem area in

²⁴J. T. Shaplin, "Practise in Teaching," Harvard Educational Review, 31 (Graduate School of Harvard, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., 1961), pp. 33-59.

²⁵Ibid, p. 42.

²⁶Smith, op. cit., p. 8.

which principals could be of considerable service to beginners.²⁷ Many new teachers are unaware of the resources available in the community. Assistance in obtaining material serves to facilitate the teacher's task and as a result, increase the teacher's satisfaction.

Evaluation

The literature indicates a two-fold evaluation problem for beginning teachers: (1) an inability to evaluate individual pupil differences, and (2) an inability to evaluate the degree of success in meeting school objectives.

The abstract quality of evaluation, when associated with more concrete problems such as discipline, makes its measurement difficult. Research has, however, identified it as a basic and lasting problem which often cannot be solved by the individual alone.

After analyzing the replies of eighty administrators, Stout came to the conclusion that:

Teachers are failing, in the main, not because they are deficient in command of subject matter but because they lack the adequate understanding of their students and are so unskillful with their efforts within the complex processes of human engineering.²⁸

Other literature has been critical of teacher preparation and the teacher's relative inability to evaluate

²⁷Sister M. C. Kuefler, "A Study of the Orientation Procedures for New Teachers in Selected School Systems," (unpublished Master's of Education thesis, The University of Alberta, Edmonton, 1959), p. 86.

²⁸Stout, op. cit., p. 46.

pupils. Berlin claims that student teaching practices are too brief and artificial. Education programs have been criticized for not presenting student teachers with a realistic picture of the possible pupil differences within the classroom.²⁹ Administrators do not usually perceive pupil evaluation as a major problem for beginning teachers. In Smith's research only ten per cent of the replies were "concerned with the teacher's inability to relate his planning and his teaching to the range of individual differences."³⁰

The ability of the beginning teacher to evaluate the expectations of the school is the area in which administrators and a good orientation program can be most helpful. Wallace concluded that this was a significant issue when 75 per cent of the beginning teachers agreed that two of the most commonly experienced problems were learning administrative routines and understanding the school's system of evaluation. In the same study the problem of gaining an understanding of the school's objectives was ranked fifth.³¹ In a more recent study, Whiteman identified a lack of understanding school philosophy as the major problem.³²

²⁹I. N. Berlin, "Unrealistics in Teacher Education," The Education Digest, XXX:7 (March, 1965), p. 23.

³⁰Smith, op. cit., p. 7.

³¹Wallace, op. cit., p. 250.

³²Whiteman, op. cit., p. 23.

Planning

The effectiveness of a beginning teacher's planning is related to the number and difficulty of existing problems. At the same time, many of the problems may be the result of poor planning. Smiley and Sprague identified planning as a most difficult area for the beginning teacher.³³ Planning is influenced by the grade level being taught, an adequate perception of individual differences, and the understanding which the beginning teacher has of the school's objectives. In the research carried out by Smith, district superintendents mentioned planning as the area in which beginning teachers were most often ineffective. A summary of the conclusions indicated that "they have difficulty in setting up a proper schedule or timetable. Teachers, particularly in high school, have difficulty in spacing their planning; their lessons have an isolated quality."³⁴

Parent Relations

Most of the teachers' relations with parents involve verbal interaction; therefore, the necessary professional requirements of the teacher include the ability to communicate, not only with pupils, but also with parents. Much of the literature indicates that verbal skills with parents are

³³Smiley, op. cit., p. 15.

³⁴Smith, op. cit., p. 8.

too often regarded as natural by-products of training. In discussions which are complicated with attitudes, emotions, and conflicts of interest, satisfactory relationships in terms of the purpose of the teacher are usually difficult. Sarason indicated a need for further education in stating that parent interviews were "a function which teachers are expected to and must perform even though they do not receive the slightest bit of training."³⁵ Although parent interviews were not regarded as a serious problem by the principals in Smith's study, they did indicate that "some elementary teachers with only two years of training are at a particular disadvantage when dealing with parents who find them inept, unsure of themselves, and inadequately prepared for a professional job."³⁶

Discipline

Discipline is often regarded as a serious problem because its detrimental effects can be felt in the entire teaching situation. Smith proposed that poor discipline could often be a symptom of many other problems in the classroom.³⁷ A similar conclusion was reached by Flesher who found that poor discipline was closely associated with the beginning teacher's lack of knowledge about school

³⁵ Sarason, op. cit., p. 12.

³⁶ Smith, op. cit., p. 7.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 2.

policies and procedures.³⁸ The implications are that poor discipline may arise from conditions other than an inability to control children.

The related theory indicated the importance of adjusting human behaviour to institutionalized roles and individual needs. In the classroom, a teacher must be capable of establishing good personal relations with all pupils. Studies have shown that discipline problems do not usually arise out of situations over which the teacher has no control. Shaplin stressed the importance of a background in the behavioural sciences, for in addition to learning the expectations of each class, the beginning teacher must be aware of the consequences and reactions to every decision. It was his opinion that the novice teacher with ambivalent attitudes about authority would, when he was first tested by pupils, react with excessive temper and extreme authoritarianism.³⁹ Suitable character and personality appear to be important where discipline is concerned.

Professional Relationships

A survey of the literature indicated that beginning teachers experienced few or no problems in their informal relationships with the teaching staff. Many beginning teachers found fellow teachers and department heads to be

³⁸W. R. Flesher, "The Beginning Teacher," Educational Research Bulletin, XXIV (January, 1945), p. 18.

³⁹Shaplin, op. cit., p. 8.

the best source of assistance during the first year.⁴⁰

Some problems do appear to exist between the novice teachers and the administration, but when these are viewed in relation to other problem areas they do not appear serious. McGillivray found that although there was general agreement in problem areas, the teachers expected more assistance than that which the principal felt was adequate.⁴¹ Similar conclusions were reached by Smith. Thirty per cent of the beginning teachers expressed dissatisfaction with what was perceived as an unduly high proportion of difficult students, 34 per cent found administrative requirements interfering with their teaching and 37 per cent felt that they were given assignments which were too heavy. In contrast, the principal respondents of the same study expressed the "strong feeling" that beginning teachers were "slow", "lazy" and "inconsistent".⁴² The research implies the need for a more satisfactory relationship between beginning teachers and administrators.

⁴⁰ McGillivray, op. cit., p. 147.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Smith, op. cit., p. 7.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND HYPOTHESES

The instrumentation and methodology used in the research are explained in the brief account of the research design. This is followed by a statement of the research hypotheses and an explanation of the statistical treatments applied to the data.

I. RESEARCH DESIGN

This research was designed to examine the major problems perceived by beginning teachers and to determine the relative degree of their difficulty. The problems were investigated in relation to the selected criteria of sex, age, grade level taught, and the number of years of teacher training.

Instrumentation

The two part Beginning Teachers' Questionnaire¹ for this study was adapted from one developed by Dropkin and Taylor.²

Part I served the purpose of obtaining the personal data of the respondents. The data included in this part

¹Beginning Teachers' Questionnaire, Appendix A.

²S. Dropkin and M. Taylor, "Perceived Problems of Beginning Teachers and Related Factors," Journal of Teacher Education, 14 (December, 1963), p. 384.

were age, sex, years of university training, degree or degrees held, name of teacher training institution, grade levels taught, and average size of classes taught.

Part II of the Beginning Teachers' Questionnaire consisted of seventy-three items which examined the eight problem areas of classroom routine, methods of teaching, materials and resources, planning, relations with parents, evaluation, discipline, and professional relationships. The items were so arranged that an item for each problem area appeared before a second from any one area was introduced. For example, items 1, 8, 16, 30, 37, 45, 52, 59, 67 examined the problem of classroom routine and items 2, 9, 17, 24, etc., examined the problem area of methods.

The problem areas represented in this questionnaire were those that the survey of related literature revealed to be the most serious. A difficulty in ranking problems has been evidenced in other research. This questionnaire, which indicated the degree of difficulty on a five point ranking scale, permitted the assessment of the degree of difficulty for each problem area. The range of the scale of difficulty was from extremely difficult, very difficult, somewhat difficult, easy to solve, to no problem at all. Previous use of a similar method of analysis was found to be advantageous and it also indicated that teachers' perceptions of their problems can be assessed with a high degree

of reliability.³

Originally the questionnaire was composed of eighty items. Prior to the research described in this thesis, a pilot study was carried out in an urban district in western Manitoba. The questionnaire was administered to the total population of twenty-three first year teachers who were on staff. Subsequent reliability and validity tests necessitated reducing the number of items to seventy-three.

Methodology

The sample. The sample for this study was drawn from all the beginning teachers in their first year of full time teaching in the Edmonton Public School System. Questionnaires were sent to the total population of 335 beginning teachers within the system during the 1967-68 school year. Teachers from the grade levels of I to XII inclusive were included in the population.

The responses. Conditions made it difficult for all responses to be used in the data analysis. Some questionnaires were improperly or incompletely answered. Other respondents indicated that they were responsible for such subject areas as guidance or for teaching special classes such as those for retarded or handicapped children. The problems for these areas could not be considered representative of those experienced in an average classroom situation.

³Ibid., p. 386.

These responses were arbitrarily rejected by the researcher.

Table I shows the number of questionnaires distributed and the number of responses. There was a 72.24 per cent return or 242 questionnaires from the total of 335 distributed.

TABLE I
NUMBER OF QUESTIONNAIRES DISTRIBUTED AND RETURNED

	Questionnaires Distributed	Questionnaires Returned
Number	335	242
Per Cent	100	72.24

Table II indicates the number of responses used in the final sample. Two hundred and twenty responses or 90.91 per cent of the 242 returned questionnaires were used in the data analysis.

TABLE II
NUMBER OF QUESTIONNAIRES USED IN THE FINAL SAMPLE

	Questionnaires Returned	Questionnaires Rejected	Questionnaires Accepted
Number	242	22	220
Per Cent	100	9.09	90.91

Characteristics of the respondents. The sample used in the research comprised 220 beginning teachers. Table III provides a summary of the personal data concerning the characteristics of the respondents whose questionnaires were used in this study.

TABLE III
PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Personal Characteristics	Number of Teachers	Per Cent of Teachers
SEX:		
1. Male	73	33.18
2. Female	147	66.82
TOTAL	220	100
AGE:		
1. 20 or under	27	12.27
2. 21 - 23	117	53.19
3. 24 - 26	42	19.09
4. 27 or over	34	15.45
TOTAL	220	100
GRADE LEVEL TAUGHT:		
1. 1 - 3	50	22.72
2. 4 - 6	46	20.91
3. 7 - 9	83	37.73
4. 10-12	41	18.64
TOTAL	220	100
YEARS OF TEACHER TRAINING:		
1. Under 2	-	-
2. 2 - 3	91	41.36
3. 4 or over	129	58.64
TOTAL	220	100

The personal characteristics of the respondents indicated a similarity to those of the population. The population of beginning teachers was composed of 38.7 per cent males and 62.2 per cent females. The sample indicated a proportion of 33.18 per cent males and 66.82 per cent females. Similarity also existed between the sample means and population means for the number of years of training and the proportion of teachers in elementary and secondary schools.

II. OPERATIONAL HYPOTHESES

The hypotheses in this section have been derived from the related studies and research presented in Chapter II. Because there appeared to be contradictory findings on which to base directional hypotheses, all hypotheses have been presented in the null form.

Hypothesis One

There are no significant differences among mean scores for beginning teachers on the eight problem areas.

Hypothesis Two

There are no significant differences between the mean scores of beginning male and beginning female teachers on each of the eight problem areas.

Hypothesis Three

There are no significant differences among the mean

scores of the four age groups of beginning teachers on each of the eight problem areas.

Hypothesis Four

There are no significant differences among the mean scores of the four grade levels of beginning teachers on each of the eight problem areas.

Hypothesis Five

There are no significant differences between the mean scores of beginning teachers with three or fewer years of teacher training and four or more years of teacher training on each of the eight problem areas.

III. TREATMENT OF THE DATA

The purpose of the study was to determine which of the eight problems presented the greatest degree of difficulty for beginning teachers. To carry out this purpose, the data collected were treated in the following manner.

The raw scores recorded on the questionnaires represented the respondents' perceptions of the degree of difficulty associated with each problem area. These raw scores, ranging from one to five, were categorized into respective problem areas. The total score means for each problem area were then calculated. A low mean score indicated a problem area of difficulty and a high mean score indicated an area which presented little or no difficulty for the respondent.

The reliability and validity tests upon the original questionnaire reduced the number of items to seventy-three. The unequal number of items in each problem area necessitated a linear transformation or pro-rating of the problem area means to a common base. A common base of ten, the largest number of items in any one problem area, was used. This transformation served to ensure a more standardized scale of total score means among all problem areas.

The analysis of variance was chosen to test the significance of the differences between the means of the different problem areas for all hypotheses. It was considered that the data satisfied the assumptions underlying the analysis of variance test.⁴ When significant differences were found between means by the analysis of variance, the Newman-Keuls test, which "is particularly useful in probing the nature of the differences between means following a significant over-all F",⁵ was used to test the range distribution of significant mean differences of the problem area variables. The .05 level of significance was established for the rejection of the null hypotheses.

⁴G. A. Ferguson, Statistical Analysis in Psychology and Education (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1959), p. 294.

⁵B. J. Winer, Statistical Principles in Experimental Design (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1962), p. 80.

CHAPTER IV

TESTING THE HYPOTHESES

In this chapter the results of the statistical tests which were used to examine the null hypotheses and the significant results of these tests are discussed.

This research was confined to one urban school system; therefore, the extent to which generalizations may be applied to the problems of beginning teachers of other school systems is limited and must be made with caution.

I. HYPOTHESIS ONE

Hypothesis one states that there are no significant differences among mean scores for beginning teachers on the eight problem areas.

Prior to testing hypothesis one, the prorated means based upon the responses of the 220 beginning teachers were calculated for each problem area. The resulting means and their standard deviations are illustrated in Table IV, page 38.

In order to test the hypothesis that the means of each problem area were estimates of the same population parameter, an analysis of variance was used to compare the variance between problem areas with the variance due to items within problem areas.

TABLE IV
 PRORATED MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS ON THE
 EIGHT PROBLEM AREAS FOR BEGINNING TEACHERS*

Problem Area	Means	Standard Deviations
Classroom Routine	39.09	4.85
Methods	32.98	5.51
Materials and Resources	35.10	6.45
Planning	36.98	5.52
Parent Relations	38.21	6.37
Evaluation	34.32	5.72
Discipline	33.20	5.93
Professional Relationships	35.98	5.89

* N = 220

Findings

The resulting F ratio of 69.63 was significant beyond the .05 level of confidence. On this basis, the hypothesis that the eight problem areas were not significantly different in difficulty was rejected. Table V shows the results of the analysis of variance.¹

TABLE V
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF DIFFICULTY MEANS FOR
BEGINNING TEACHERS ON EIGHT PROBLEM AREAS

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Means Squared	F
Between	34618.00	219.	158.07	
Within	32178.00	1540.	20.89	
Total	66796.00	1759.		69.63*

* Significant at the .05 level

Since the observed F ratio for the eight problem area means exceeded the critical value at the .05 level, the nature of the differences between means was investigated with the Newman-Keuls test for a comparison of means.² The results of this test are shown in Table VI.

¹One way analysis of variance for repeated measures described in B. J. Winer, Statistical Principles in Experimental Design (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1962), pp. 298-301.

²Ibid., pp. 309-311.

TABLE VI

NEWMAN-KEULS COMPARISON OF MEANS ON OBSERVED DEGREE
OF DIFFICULTY FOR EIGHT PROBLEM AREAS

Problem Areas	1 Classroom Routine	5 Parent Relations	4 Planning	8 Professional Relationships	3 Materials and Resources	6 Evaluation	7 Discipline	2 Methods
2 Methods	**	**	**	**	**	**	-	-
7 Discipline	**	**	**	**	**	**	-	
6 Evaluation	**	**	**	**	**	-		
3 Materials and Resources	**	**	**	**	-			
8 Professional Relationships	**	**	**	-				
4 Planning	**	**	-					
5 Parent Relations	**	-						
1 Classroom Routine	-							

** Significant at the .05 level.

The Newman-Keuls test showed a significant difference among all eight problem area means, except between the means for Methods and Discipline. This finding suggests that while the respondents did not perceive either Methods or Discipline as presenting a significantly different degree of difficulty, a significant difference was perceived among each of the remaining problem areas.

Figure 2 illustrates the pattern of difficulty implied by the significant differences found with the Newman-Keuls test. The pattern is based upon an ordering of means.

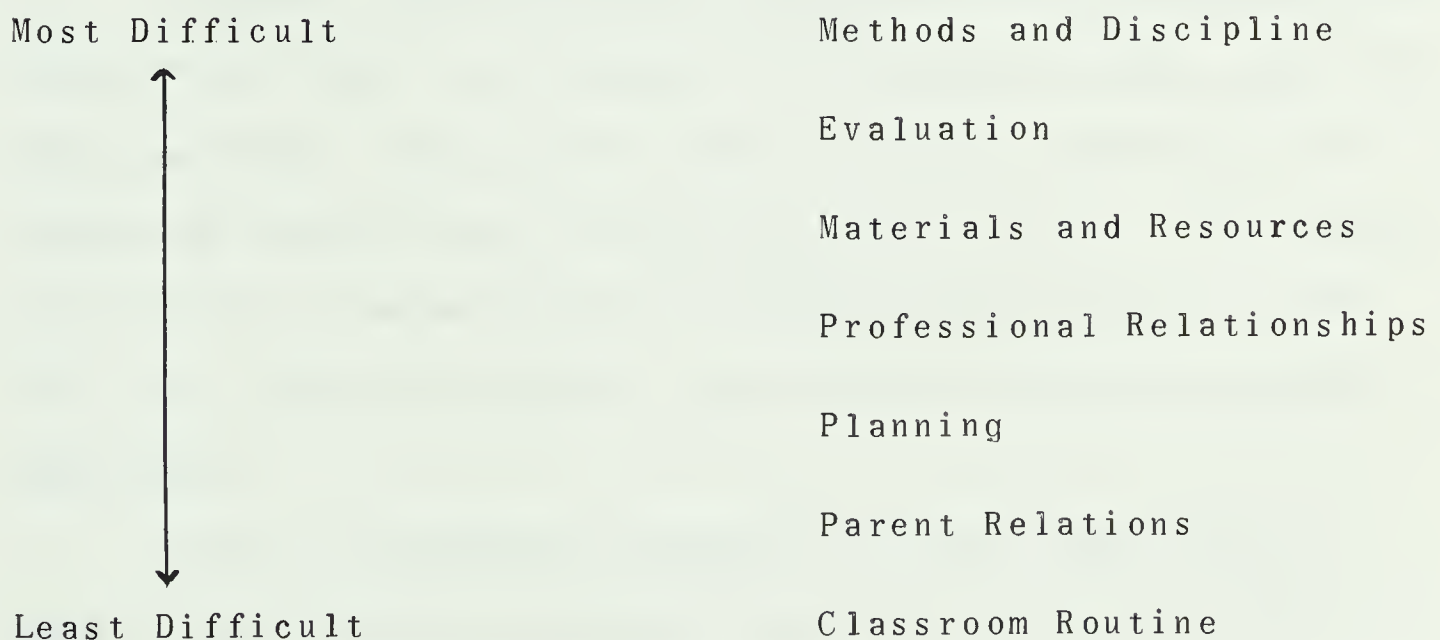


FIGURE 2
PATTERN OF DIFFICULTY SUGGESTED
BY PROBLEM MEANS

Discussion

The complications associated with ranking problem areas in relation to their seriousness have been indicated.³ Because of this, the major emphasis in this research was given to the degree of difficulty which the problems appeared to present, rather than to a ranking of them.

The observed means, suggested by the numerical choices offered on the questionnaire, were altered slightly when they were prorated. An examination of them,⁴ however, illustrates that none of the problem areas tested by the questionnaire presented a degree of difficulty with which the respondents felt unable to cope.

Methods, Discipline and Evaluation were perceived as being from "very" to "somewhat" difficult to solve. At the other extreme, the problem areas of Parent Relations and Classroom Routine were considered easy to solve. The range of difficulty between means,⁵ although significant at the .05 level, does not appear large enough to be particularly meaningful.

That the beginning teachers of this study did not rank either Methods or Discipline as presenting a different degree of difficulty is a significant factor. The findings of a number of similar studies which have identified Methods

³Supra., p. 17.

⁴See Table IV, p. 38.

⁵Ibid.

and Discipline as the two areas of greatest difficulty for novice teachers confirm these results.⁶

Evaluation was identified as a problem area also presenting a somewhat greater degree of difficulty than the remaining problem areas. Other studies support this finding.⁷ The difficulty associated with evaluation is significant because administrators do not always recognize its importance to beginning teachers.⁸

It may be concluded that Methods and Discipline were regarded as presenting degrees of difficulty which were not significantly different. A significant difference did exist among the means of all other problem areas. These findings imply that the difficulties of beginning teachers should not be regarded as a cluster of interlocking or inseparable problems.

II. HYPOTHESIS TWO

Hypothesis two states that there are no significant differences between the mean scores of beginning male and beginning female teachers on each of the eight problem areas.

Of the 220 respondents, 73 were male and 147 were female. The analysis of variance was used to test for significant differences between the means of male and female

⁶Supra., pp. 19-20.

⁷Supra., p. 23.

⁸Supra., p. 24.

teachers on the eight problem areas. The results are shown in Table VII, page 45.

Findings

Significant F ratios were obtained on the five variables of Classroom Routine, Parent Relations, Evaluation, Discipline, and Professional Relationships. For these problem areas the null hypothesis was rejected. The alternate hypothesis, that male and female beginning teachers do perceive these areas as presenting significantly different degrees of difficulty, was accepted.

Discussion

The findings of the analysis of variance indicated that Methods, the area of most difficulty for all respondents, was not significantly different for either sex. It is important to note, however, that Discipline and Evaluation, the problem areas which ranked second and third respectively under the testing of Hypothesis One, showed significant differences beyond the .05 level. All respondents found the three problem areas to be from "somewhat" to "very difficult" to solve. Female teachers also found interviewing parents, keeping records, and having satisfactory associations with the staff and administration as being significantly more difficult than the males. However, as these problems were perceived by all beginning teachers as being less difficult to solve than Discipline and Evaluation,

TABLE VII
MEAN DIFFERENCES IN THE DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY
PERCEIVED BY MALE AND FEMALE TEACHERS

Problem Area	N=73 Male	N=147 Female	F	Level of Probability
Classroom Routine	40.08	38.59	4.62	.03 *
Methods	33.75	32.60	2.14	.14
Materials and Resources	35.78	34.76	1.20	.27
Planning	37.84	36.55	2.65	.10
Parent Relations	40.01	37.31	9.04	.002*
Evaluation	35.49	33.74	4.64	.03 *
Discipline	34.81	32.40	8.32	.004*
Professional Relationships	37.14	35.40	4.29	.04 *

* Significant at the .05 level.

the implications may not be important.

McGillivray, in his study of beginning teachers, found the ranks given by male teachers to problem areas to be significantly correlated with those given by the female teachers.⁹ A non-parametric Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient test on the ranking of means by the beginning male and female teachers in this investigation showed the correlation to be well beyond the .01 level of significance. This is similar to the findings of the McGillivray study.

A conclusion suggested by the findings of this study is that the problem areas are relatively the same for beginning teachers, whether they be men or women, but where a significant difference does exist, it is in the increased intensity of the problems for females.

III. HYPOTHESIS THREE

Hypothesis three states that there are no significant differences among the mean scores of the four age groups of beginning teachers on each of the eight problem areas.

The 220 respondents were categorized into four age groups to include the ages of 20 years or fewer, 21 to 23 years, 24 to 26 years, and 27 years or more. An analysis of variance was made of the mean scores for the different age

⁹William R. McGillivray, "A Survey of Supervisory Assistance as Perceived by Beginning Teachers in Selected Urban High Schools in Ontario," (unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Alberta, Edmonton, July, 1966), p. 111.

groups on the eight problem areas. Table VIII, page 48, illustrates the results.

Findings

A significant difference was found among the mean scores of the different age groups for the problem areas of Methods, Planning, Parent Relations, Evaluation, and Discipline. For these problem areas the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate accepted. Age appeared to make no significant difference on the degree of difficulty associated with Classroom Routine, Materials and Resources, and Professional Relationships.

Since the observed F ratio for five of the problem areas exceeded the critical value for the .05 level test, it was assumed that age variables did influence the degree of difficulty of a specific problem area. A Newman-Keuls comparison of means was used to test the range distribution of the mean scores for the problem areas of Methods, Planning, Parent Relations, Evaluation, and Discipline and to identify the age categories between which the significant differences occurred. The results of these tests are shown in Tables IX, X, XI, XII, and XIII.

Table IX, page 49, indicates that significant differences existed between the means of the teachers in category 4 and the means of both categories 1 and 3. These findings suggest that teachers who were 27 years or older experienced

TABLE VIII

MEAN DIFFERENCES IN THE DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY
PERCEIVED BY BEGINNING TEACHERS OF
DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS

Problem Area	Age Groups			F.	Level of Probability
	N=27 -20 Years	N=117 21-23 Years	N=42 24-26 Years	N=34 27 + Years	
Classroom Routine	38.56	39.01	39.29	39.51	.23
Methods	31.93	32.86	32.07	35.35	2.88
Materials and Resources	34.69	34.96	34.80	36.27	.46
Planning	36.17	36.84	36.00	39.31	2.74
Parent Relations	34.33	38.02	38.98	41.00	6.12
Evaluation	32.59	33.87	34.52	37.00	3.68
Discipline	32.56	32.60	32.83	36.21	3.58
Professional Relationships	35.76	35.71	35.19	38.07	1.80

* Significant at the .05 level.

less difficulty with Methods than those who were 20 years and under or in the 24 to 26 age category.

TABLE IX
NEWMAN-KEULS COMPARISON OF PERCEIVED MEANS
ON METHODS FOR DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS

Age Groups		4 27 + Years	2 21-23 Years	3 24-26 Years	1 -20 Years
1	-20 Years	**	-	-	-
3	24-26 Years	**	-	-	
2	21-23 Years	-	-		
4	27 + Years	-			

** Significant at the .05 level.

Table X, page 50, shows that the range distribution for age variables in Planning was similar to that for Methods. The significant differences between the means of category 4 and the means of both categories 3 and 1 indicate that teachers who were 27 years and older found less difficulty planning lessons than those who were 20 years and under and between the ages of 24 to 26 inclusive.

Table XI, page 50, shows a significant difference between category 1 and each of the other categories. Consequently, it may be concluded that the teachers who were 20 years old or less found interviewing parents significantly more difficult than those in other age groups.

TABLE X

NEWMAN-KEULS COMPARISON OF PERCEIVED MEANS
ON PLANNING FOR DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS

Age Groups		4 27 + Years	2 21-23 Years	1 -20 Years	3 24-26 Years
3	24-26 Years	**	-	-	-
1	-20 Years	**	-	-	
2	21-23 Years	-	-		
4	27 + Years	-			

** Significant at the .05 level.

TABLE XI

NEWMAN-KEULS COMPARISON OF PERCEIVED MEANS ON
PARENT RELATIONS FOR DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS

Age Groups		4 27 + Years	3 24-26 Years	2 21-23 Years	1 -20 Years
1	-20 Years	**	**	**	-
2	21-23 Years	-	-	-	
3	24-26 Years	-	-		
4	27 + Years	-			

** Significant at the .05 level.

Table XII indicates that a significant difference in the difficulties of Evaluation existed only between teachers who were 20 and under and those who were 27 or over.

TABLE XII
NEWMAN-KEULS COMPARISON OF PERCEIVED MEANS
ON EVALUATION FOR DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS

Age Groups		4 27 + Years	3 24-26 Years	2 21-23 Years	1 -20 Years
1	-20 Years	**	-	-	-
2	21-23 Years	-	-	-	
3	24-26 Years	-	-		
4	27 + Years	-			

** Significant at the .05 level.

Table XIII, page 52, shows a significant difference between category 4 and each of the other categories. From these findings it may be concluded that the teachers who were 27 years and older perceived their problems in Discipline as being less difficult to solve than the other teachers in the sample.

Discussion

The analysis of variance on the mean scores for different age groups¹⁰ indicated a significant difference

¹⁰See Table VIII, p. 48.

among the means for the problem areas of Methods, Planning, Parent Relations, Evaluation, and Discipline. The Newman-Keuls comparison indicated that where a significant difference did exist, it was the 27 years and over age group which experienced less difficulty than one or more of the other age groups in the sample. These findings are noteworthy in that Methods, Discipline, and Evaluation were three areas which the respondents rated as generally being from "somewhat difficult" to "very difficult" to solve. Planning and Parent Relations appeared to fall into the "somewhat difficult" and "easy to solve" categories. The fact that these two problem areas were not regarded as being difficult, may suggest that little importance need be attributed to the statistically significant differences among age groups.

TABLE XIII

NEWMAN-KEULS COMPARISON OF PERCEIVED MEANS
ON DISCIPLINE FOR DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS

Age Groups	4	3	2	1
	27 + Years	24-26 Years	21-23 Years	-20 Years
1 -20 Years	**	-	-	-
2 21-23 Years	**	-	-	
3 24-26 Years	**	-		
4 27 + Years	-			

** Significant at the .05 level.

IV. HYPOTHESIS FOUR

Hypothesis four states that there are no significant differences among the mean scores of the four grade levels of beginning teachers on each of the eight problem areas.

The 220 respondents were categorized into groups representing the grade levels of I to III, IV to VI, VII to IX, and X to XII. The analysis of variance was used to test for any significant difference among the four grade level groups on the eight problem areas. Table XIV, page 54, illustrates the results.

Findings

Significant F ratios were found on the three variables of Parent Relations, Evaluation, and Discipline. For these three problem areas the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. The grade level being taught was associated with the degree of difficulty being experienced by beginning teachers in the areas of Parent Relations, Discipline, and Evaluation.

The Newman-Keuls test was used to compare the range distribution of the mean scores of the problem areas for which the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table XV, page 55, indicates the results of testing the mean scores for the various grade levels on the problem area of Parent Relations. A significant difference in difficulty was found between category 4 and categories 1, 2,

TABLE XIV
MEAN DIFFERENCES IN THE DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY
PERCEIVED BY BEGINNING TEACHERS OF
DIFFERENT GRADE LEVELS

Problem Area	Grade Levels			F	Level of Probability
	N=50 I to III	N=46 IV to VI	N=83 VII to IX	N=41 X to XII	
Classroom Routine	38.40	38.96	38.84	40.57	1.71 .17
Methods	31.92	32.70	32.82	34.93	2.42 .07
Materials and Resources	34.97	35.15	34.76	35.89	.29 .83
Planning	35.91	36.69	36.89	38.78	2.16 .09
Parent Relations	35.72	37.13	38.19	42.49	10.26 .00*
Evaluation	32.98	33.15	34.84	36.22	3.39 .02*
Discipline	33.08	32.37	32.46	35.76	3.38 .02*
Professional Relationships	35.04	35.15	36.24	37.53	1.75 .15

* Significant at the .05 level.

and 3. The beginning teachers of grades X, XI, and XII perceived themselves as having significantly less difficulty with parent interviews than did the teachers of other grade levels. No significant difference in difficulty was found between the various other categories.

TABLE XV
NEWMAN-KEULS COMPARISON OF PERCEIVED
MEANS ON PARENT RELATIONS FOR
DIFFERENT GRADE LEVELS

Grade Levels		4 Grades X-XII	3 Grades VII-IX	2 Grades IV-VI	1 Grades I-III
1	Grades I-III	**	-	-	-
2	Grades IV-VI	**	-	-	
3	Grades VII-IX	**	-		
4	Grades X-XII	-			

** Significant at the .05 level.

Tables XVI, page 56, indicates the results of testing the mean scores for various grade levels on the problem area of Evaluation. A significant difference in difficulty was found between category 4 and categories 1 and 2. The teachers of grade X, XI, and XII found significantly less difficulty with Evaluation than did those teaching grades I to VI.

TABLE XVI
NEWMAN-KEULS COMPARISON OF PERCEIVED
MEANS ON EVALUATION FOR
DIFFERENT GRADE LEVELS

Grade Levels		4 Grades X-XII	3 Grades VII-IX	2 Grades IV-VI	1 Grades I-III
1	Grades I-III	**	-	-	-
2	Grades IV-VI	**	-	-	
3	Grades VII-IX	-	-		
4	Grades X-XII	-			

** Significant at the .05 level.

Table XVII, page 57, indicates the results of testing the mean scores for various grade levels on the problem area of Discipline. A significant difference was found in the perceived degree of difficulty between category 4 and categories 2 and 3. Beginning teachers of grades X, XI, and XII regarded their problems in Discipline as being more easily solved than those teaching grades IV to IX.

It is interesting to note that primary teachers perceived their discipline problems as ranging in difficulty between the extremes of the high school and the intermediate grades but not significantly different from either.

TABLES XVII

NEWMAN-KEULS COMPARISON OF PERCEIVED
MEANS ON DISCIPLINE FOR
DIFFERENT GRADE LEVELS

Grade Levels		4 Grades X-XII	1 Grades I-III	3 Grades VII-IX	2 Grades IV-VI
2	Grades IV-VI	**	-	-	-
3	Grades VII-IX	**	-	-	
1	Grades I-III	-	-		
4	Grades X-XII	-			

** Significant at the .05 level.

Discussion

A significant result arising out of the testing of hypothesis four was the indication that Evaluation and Discipline were the only two problem areas of those which all respondents identified as being difficult to solve, that were related to the grade level. The degree of difficulty perceived in teaching Methods did not vary significantly from grade to grade.

Wherever there was a significant difference among the means, the Newman-Keuls test identified the beginning teachers in high schools as those who generally perceived their problems as being less difficult.

Parent Relations, a problem area considered by all respondents as being "easy to solve", indicated a

significant difference between the grades X to XII category and each of the other categories. These results may be partially explained by unsolicited comments volunteered by respondents. Teachers of the higher grades often indicated that parent interviews were no problem because they were not carried out by the teachers themselves. In the high schools, most of the parent interviews were apparently the responsibility of guidance counsellors.

V. HYPOTHESIS FIVE

Hypothesis five states that there are no significant differences between the mean scores of beginning teachers with three or fewer years of teacher training and four or more years of teacher training on each of the eight problem areas.

The urban school system in which this research was carried out employed no teachers with less than two years training. As a result, there were no beginning teachers in the sample with less than two years of teacher training. The results of the analysis of variance made on the mean scores for the two groups are shown in Table XVIII, page 59.

Findings

The results shown in Table XVIII indicate that the analysis of variance found a significant F level on one variable, that of Parent Relations. For all other problem areas there were no significant differences among means.

TABLE XVIII

MEAN DIFFERENCES IN THE DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY
PERCEIVED BY BEGINNING TEACHERS WITH
DIFFERENT AMOUNTS OF TRAINING

Problem Area	Years of Teacher Training		F	Level of Probability
	N=91 2-3 Years	N=129 4 + Years		
Classroom Routine	38.96	39.17	.11	.74
Methods	33.01	32.96	.00	.94
Materials and Resources	34.43	35.57	1.66	.19
Planning	36.60	37.24	.71	.40
Parent Relations	36.24	39.59	15.71	.0001*
Evaluation	33.48	34.91	3.37	.07
Discipline	33.40	33.05	.17	.67
Professional Relationships	35.34	36.43	1.86	.17

* Significant at the .05 level.

The null hypothesis was, therefore, accepted for all problem areas but Parent Relations.

Discussion

The findings illustrated in Table XVIII, page 59, suggest that years of teacher training made little or no difference upon the perceived difficulty of the problem areas by the respondents. Only Parent Relations, a problem area regarded by the respondents as being easy to solve, showed a significant F ratio for the two groups.

The ranking of the problems by means is not associated with the number of years training. Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient tests found the rank correlation of problem areas for the two groups to be significant beyond the .05 level. This finding is confirmed by McGillivray who, in a similar study, found the correlation of problem area ranking by unqualified and qualified teachers to be significant beyond the .05 level.¹¹

Any suggestion, as to the factors causing the significant difference between means for Parent Relations, can only be speculation. It is possible that the additional time spent in an educational institution may result in increased confidence and maturity. This generalization is confirmed by an earlier British Columbia study where the principals indicated that "teachers with only two years of

¹¹McGillivray, op. cit., p. 91.

training are at a particular disadvantage when dealing with parents who find them inept, unsure of themselves, and inadequately prepared for a professional job."¹²

VI. SUMMARY

The problems of beginning teachers are a result of multiple factors. This is illustrated by comments respondents wrote on the questionnaires.

Some of these things are difficult, not in themselves, but in finding the correct procedures and the time to do them. First year teaching sometimes seems a 36 hour a day job and many of the extras are necessarily by-passed to ensure the instruction of the basic curriculum which seems to grow each year.

My biggest problem is lack of time and energy to do everything I would like to do.

These comments, repetitive in basic content, indicate that beginning teachers are enthusiastic but in need of additional free time. Stewart declared a similar finding. Upon investigating the adequacy of teacher in-service programs for beginning teachers in Alberta, he concluded that the "teacher work load was a leading factor inhibiting the effectiveness of in-service efforts."¹³

The research found Methods, Discipline, and Evaluation

¹²C. E. Smith, "Report on a Study of the Problems of Beginning Teachers in British Columbia," Report No. 5, British Columbia Research Council, 1958.

¹³L. D. Stewart, "A Study of the In-Service Educational Opportunities Available to Beginning Teachers in Alberta," (unpublished Doctor of Education Dissertation, University of Colorado, July, 1966), p. 144.

to be the three problem areas presenting the most difficulty for the respondents. Age was the only variable which appeared to be associated with significant differences in the degree of difficulty for problems in Methods. The variables of sex, age, and grade level were all associated with significant differences in the degree of difficulty for the problem areas of Discipline and Evaluation. Years of teacher training appeared to make no difference upon the degree of difficulty associated with any of the major problem areas. Parent Relations was the only problem area of the eight examined for which significant differences were found for all of the four variables of sex, age, grade level taught and the years of teacher training. However, respondents generally found problems in this area "easy to solve".

Most beginning teachers appear to experience the greatest degree of difficulty with problems in Methods, Discipline, and Evaluation. Upon examining these problem areas certain inferences may be made. Males who are over 26 years of age and teaching high school are less likely to experience difficulties with the problem areas which presented the greatest degree of difficulty for the teachers. Females who are under the age of 26 and teaching grades IV to IX are more likely to experience problems in these areas.

If these problems, reported by teachers, can be used as a basis for planning teacher education and in-service supervisory aid, the more specific problem areas identified

under the variables of sex, age, grade level taught and years of teacher education would suggest a possible place from which to begin.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The procedures followed in analyzing the data related to the hypotheses, and the subsequent findings, were reported in the preceding chapter. In Chapter V the study procedures are summarized, the conclusions of the study are briefly outlined, some of the implications are indicated, and areas for further research are suggested.

I. SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to determine which problems were perceived as presenting the greatest degree of difficulty for the beginning teachers in an urban public school system.

Four related sub-problems were then investigated to determine any significant variance among the problem areas on the basis of the selected variables.

The related literature and research suggested eight problem areas which were subsequently investigated in the study. In order to carry out this investigation, five hypotheses were developed and tested. The first hypothesis tested the probability of a significant difference in the degree of difficulty among the eight areas. The remaining four hypotheses tested for any significant differences

within problem areas associated with the variables of sex, age, grade level taught, and years of teacher training.

An analysis of variance was used to test for significance of differences among means. Where significant differences were found, the Newman-Keuls test was used to identify the areas in which these differences occurred. On the basis of these tests a number of conclusions were drawn.

II. CONCLUSIONS

It would be speculation to generalize the findings of this study beyond the parameters of the population used in the research. The following findings are based on the analysis of questionnaire returns from 220 beginning teachers in an urban school system.

1. For the group as a whole, none of the problem areas investigated in this study indicated a situation for the beginning teachers which was regarded as impossible or extremely difficult to solve. The most difficult problem areas were perceived as being from "very" to "somewhat" difficult.

2. The beginning teachers did experience more difficulty solving problems in some areas of classroom teaching than in others.

3. The greatest degree of difficulty was experienced with problems in Methods and Discipline. The remaining problem areas, ordered on the basis of difficulty, were

Evaluation, Materials and Resources, Professional Relationships, Planning, Parent Relations, and Classroom Routine--the last being a problem areas perceived as "easy to solve".

4. Where the selected variables appeared to be associated with significant differences in the degree of difficulty, the problem areas were generally those which most beginning teachers in the sample perceived as being the most difficult to solve.

5. The number of years of teacher education was the factor least associated with the degree of difficulty a beginning teacher may experience in certain problem areas.

6. Age and sex were the two personal characteristics which could be considered as significantly associated with the degree of difficulty beginning teachers may experience in certain problem areas.

A wide range of diversified problems face teachers who instruct the different grades from one to twelve. As a result, attempts to measure these problems were to some degree limited to problems relevant to all grade levels. It was assumed at the outset that some of the problem areas investigated would not apply to certain teachers and that the responses from these teacher would indicate "no problem".

III. IMPLICATIONS

Although none of the problems experienced by the beginning teachers in the sample were perceived as being

extreme in nature, the investigation has indicated a need for continued efforts towards remedial assistance. This need is made more evident by the fact that the degree of difficulty varies among problem areas.

The teachers whom the study identified as those most likely to experience difficulty should be given additional assistance and training in the areas which pose greater problems for them. Induction programs could be orientated towards giving them a better understanding of school policy, which in turn may improve discipline and evaluation. Teachers who begin their careers at an older age appear to experience fewer problems. This difference may be attributed to the increased maturity and confidence which is often associated with age. The implications are that both sex and age should be taken into consideration when teacher training programs, orientation programs, and assistance for first year teachers are being planned.

It cannot be assumed that all beginning teachers will experience the same kind of problems. Therefore, the challenge to those in responsible positions is to recognize individual differences and to determine the most likely problem areas. When problem areas are identified, educators will be in a position to assist the beginning teacher in solving the difficulties associated with the first year of teaching.

IV FURTHER RESEARCH

The findings of this study suggest that the selected problem areas do present varying degrees of difficulty for beginning teachers. To further validate this conclusion and to increase the knowledge of beginning teacher problems, the following studies are suggested for further research.

1. A study replicating the procedures of this study for rural populations.

2. A study replicating the procedures of this study but contrasting beginning and experienced teacher populations. The respondents of this investigation completed the questionnaires in late February when, it was hoped, the numerous confusing problems of the first months of teaching would be solved. A study using experienced teachers and beginning teachers would indicate whether experience tends to reduce the difficulty of certain or all problem areas.

3. A study of the major problem areas but one which would control for such factors as age, teacher training or grade levels taught. This added depth would identify more specifically where problem areas exist.

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APPENDIX A

BEGINNING TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

J. Leslie Milne
Suite 1902
8510 - 111th Street
Edmonton, Alberta
February 22, 1968

Dear Educator:

I would like to solicit your assistance in gathering data for my thesis entitled "The Problems of Beginning Teachers." This research will be used to complete my Master of Education degree in Educational Administration.

Through the kind cooperation of the Edmonton Public School Board I was able to secure the names of all teachers who are beginning their teaching careers in the system. The intent of this research is to discover the areas which first year teachers perceive as presenting the greatest degree of difficulty.

The success of my study now depends upon your cooperation. Knowing that you are very busy, I have made every attempt to keep the questionnaire brief and simple. It will not require more than ten minutes to complete. No names or addresses of any kind are required and the responses will be kept completely anonymous. Therefore, I would appreciate it very much if you would complete the questionnaire, enclose it in the stamped, self-addressed envelope, and place it in the mail.

In closing, I would again like to urge your cooperation and to thank you for taking an active interest in education.

Yours truly,

PART I

Kindly fill out the required information.

- 1) Age _____
- 2) Sex _____
- 3) Years of university training _____
- 4) Degree or degrees held _____
- 5) Name of teacher training institution _____
- 6) Grade levels taught _____
- 7) Average size of classes taught _____

PART II

Please read each item. Using the scoring key to the right of each item indicate the degree of difficulty you are experiencing in your present job by placing an X in the appropriate box numbers 1 2 3 4 or 5.

1. I find this problem extremely difficult to solve within the present school situation.
2. I find this a problem which is very difficult to solve in the present school situation.
3. I find this a problem which is somewhat difficult to solve in the present school situation.
4. I find this a problem which is easy to solve in the present school situation.
5. I do not find this a problem at all.

Sample:

Helping students to put on outer clothing

1	2	3	4	5
	X			

The X under 2 indicates that this teacher finds the problem very difficult to solve in her present situation.

Please respond to all items.

Thank you for your cooperation.

	Extremely Difficult	Very Difficult	Somewhat Difficult	Easy	No Problem
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Managing the distribution and collection of materials, milk, etc.					
2. Formulating questions that provoke discussion.					
3. Finding out what content I am supposed to cover in my grade.					
4. Discussing with parents the student's achievement.					
5. Interpreting the results of standardized tests.					
6. Handling students who waste school materials.					
7. Establishing a good relationship with the principal.					
8. Having students follow a common procedure in answering questions.					
9. Maintaining students' interest throughout a unit of work.					
10. Finding out about community resources that I can use in my teaching.					
11. Planning segment of work for a week or longer.					
12. Getting parents to take an interest in the student's behaviour.					
13. Being able to understand changes in students' behaviour.					
14. Accepting students' aggressive behaviour towards me.					
15. Obtaining information on the correct school procedures.					
16. Managing the transition from one activity to another.					

	Extremely Difficult 1	Very Difficult 2	Somewhat Difficult 3	Easy 4	No Problem 5
17. Using the committee method with students.					
18. Finding out about Ratio and T.V. programs related to daily classwork of my students.					
19. Working out details of sequence and timing for daily segments of work.					
20. Talking with parents I wish to contact.					
21. Being able to prepare classroom tests that are valid.					
22. Working with overly dependent students.					
23. Preparing material for subjects not prepared to teach.					
24. Introducing a new topic and obtaining high interest.					
25. Finding out what the objectives of education are for my grade.					
26. Finding materials with which to prepare simple science demonstrations.					
27. Selecting appropriate standardized achievement tests.					
28. Handling cliques in the classroom.					
29. Assuming the responsibilities associated with teaching.					
30. Keeping pupil attendance records accurately.					
31. Differentiating instruction among the slow, average and gifted students in class.					

	Extremely Difficult 1	Very Difficult 2	Somewhat Difficult 3	Easy 4	No Problem 5
32. Making arrangements for field trips.					
33. Explaining my techniques of teaching to parents.					
34. Involving pupils in self-evaluation activities as a continuous activity.					
35. Having students see relationship between undesirable behaviour and the consequences.					
36. Meeting the demands of marking and preparation.					
37. Ordering, securing, and accounting for supplies and equipment.					
38. Involving students in planning units of work.					
39. Finding pictures and other exhibits for my bulletin board.					
40. Working out details of assembly programs.					
41. Helping parents understand the reporting system of my school.					
42. Collecting anecdotal information.					
43. Finding ways to integrate isolated, dislike students in group activities.					
44. Adjusting to a professional code of behaviour.					
45. Organizing an orderly procedure for students to hang up their wraps.					
46. Involving many of the students in group discussions.					

	Extremely Difficult 1	Very Difficult 2	Somewhat Difficult 3	Easy 4	No Problem 5
47. Having work for some students while I am working with other groups or individuals.					
48. Conducting an interview with a parent.					
49. Explaining my grading system to students.					
50. Handling the constantly disrupting student.					
51. Discovering the expectations, duties and obligations of the school.					
52. Organizing procedures for moving as a class from place to place.					
53. Teaching reading to readers one or more years below grade level.					
54. Obtaining the appropriate and necessary textbooks for the class.					
55. Finding out what content students in my class covered last year.					
56. Enlisting parent aid for activities such as trips, making costumes for a play, or class mother.					
57. Using test results and anecdotal information in working with individual students.					
58. Maintaining order during field trips.					
59. Having students continue to work when the teacher is interrupted or leaves the room.					
60. Grouping students in various content areas.					
61. Finding films and film strips related to the area being studied.					

	Extremely Difficult 1	Very Difficult 2	Somewhat Difficult 3	Easy 4	No Problem 5
62. Having activities ready for students' rest periods.					
63. Getting parents to visit the appropriate agency or person to obtain help I feel the student needs.					
64. Identifying students in need of psychological testing or counseling.					
65. Having students maintain quiet or silence while working independently.					
66. Finding time for assigned extra curricular activities.					
67. Getting students to bring materials from home when needed.					
68. Arranging first-hand experiences leading to learning in basic skills and concepts.					
69. Preparing plans that can be used by substitute teachers.					
70. Establishing a rapport with parents so that they will provide information candidly and without embarrassment.					
71. Judging students' progress in terms of my aims and purposes.					
72. Handling students' aggressive behaviour toward one another.					
73. Obtaining information on the procedural regulations of the school.					

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